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Approved For Release 2001/08/09 : CIA-RDP91-00682R000300010086-7

SECURITY INFORMATION

JAN 4 1952

The Honorable Brian McMahon
Chairman
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy
Congress of the United States
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Our semi-annual estimate on the Soviet atomic energy program was scheduled for issue in January 1952, but I believe it is necessary to postpone its issuance for the following reasons.

During the preparation of the July 1951 report, strong differences of opinion began to develop on the estimate of the Soviet atomic weapon stockpile. Although these differences were apparently reconciled at the time the report was issued, further very careful study by one group of scientific intelligence personnel has confirmed its previous opinions and again has raised drastic differences in the interpretation of available information. These differences may disappear as the result of the analyses mentioned in the second paragraph. We hope they will.

At present a case can be made by the proponents of both sets of figures, but an estimate which simply states two divergent opinions would be of little value to you or to the National Security Council. Therefore I have asked three eminent engineer-scientists to act as expert consultants, and if necessary to review impartially the evidence which prompted these two widely different conclusions. They would at least be able to give an unbiased appraisal and decide where the weight of acceptable evidence lies. This may take some time, but it is the only procedure I can think of which will give an answer in which all of us can have reasonable confidence.

I will inform you at the earliest possible moment when the report can be expected.

Sincerely,

SIGNED:

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WALTER B. SMITH

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OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP

TO	INITIALS	DATE
1 Legislative Counsel Room 317, South Building		9 Jan
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FROM		DATE
1 Assistant Director, SI		7 Jan 52
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REMARKS:

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